

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated July 1, 2004, pending claims 2-7 are objected to because of informalities. Claims 1, 2, and 7-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application No. 2003/0127827 ("Hulsey"). Claims 3-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hulsey. Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 10-18 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim Objections

Applicants have amended claims 2 and 7 to correct the informalities identified by the Examiner. Further, Applicants have amended claims 2, 7, 10, 13 and 15 to correct additional informalities present in those claims. Applicants request that the Examiner withdraw the objections to claims 2-7 and indicate these claims as allowable.

35 U.S.C. §102(e) Rejections

Claims 1, 2, and 7-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Hulsey. Applicant has amended claim 1 to more clearly describe the invention. Hulsey, therefore, does not disclose or teach each and every element of the Applicants' independent claim 1. In addition to Hulsey not disclosing either a mount member or a hinge bracket manufactured as a single, prefabricated component, Hulsey does not disclose a single, prefabricated mount member or hinge bracket having a pivot bore, a locking bore, and at least one integral welding flange extending rearwardly therefrom. Applicant further has amended claim 8 to more clearly define the invention. Hulsey does not disclose a mount member and a hinge bracket having at least one integral welding flange extending rearwardly therefrom for connecting to a trailer frame member and coupler tongue arm respectively. As such, claims 1

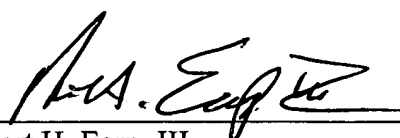
and 8 appear patentable over Hulsey. Further, as claims 2, 7, and 9 either depend directly or indirectly from claims 1 and 8, and add additional limitations thereto, the arguments asserted herein are also applicable to the dependent claims 2, 7, and 9. As such, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the 102(e) rejection of claims 1, 2, and 7-9 and indicate these claims as allowable.

35 U.S.C. §103(a) Rejections

Claims 3-6 stand rejected as being unpatentable over Hulsey. Claims 3-6 depend either directly or indirectly from claim 1, and add additional limitations thereto. Therefore, the arguments asserted herein for claim 1 are also applicable to the dependent claims 3-6. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the 103(a) rejection of claims 3-6 and indicate these claims as allowable.

New claim 19 has been added hereto and appears patentable over the art. No new matter has been added as a result of any amendments. In light of the foregoing, Applicant submits that the application is in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,


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Date: 10/15/04